

Editorial ? Councillors tried foresight; Electorate didn't let them

It has been said by many knowledgeable people that we are always so much wiser when we use our hindsight. It's that same logic that prompts people to sometimes say "I told you so!" when they have been proven right after the fact. It is a fact that there have been lots of occasions when people have tried to use their foresight and put forth good ideas, only to have those ideas shot down because they were out of favour at the moment.

The issue came up briefly last Wednesday, at a public open house session hosted by the Town of Caledon over the planned Alton Mill subdivision. A main talking point at the meeting was the idea to use Queen Street in the hamlet to get the construction equipment from the designated haul routes at Main Street and Regional Road 136 to the site. There were suggestions that Mississauga Road should be used, thus avoiding the problems of have many heavy trucks run through the middle of Alton, and keeping them away from Alton Public School.

The problem with that idea, as was pointed out several times at the meeting, is that stretch of Mississauga Road is simply not up to the job of handling that many trucks, and the cost to bring it up to standards would probably add a couple more percentage points to the Town's tax bill.

One man at the meeting charged that the Town should have had the foresight in the early 1990s and taken care of having the road repaired.

The problem was the Town working on just such a program, of getting hard surfaces on all the roads in town. Then we had the 1991 municipal election, which was dominated by a group calling itself the Taxpayers' Coalition. This group was formed by people from the grassroots who were genuinely interested in the rate of taxes they were paying. But the group was taken over but people who were more interested in getting certain people out of office.

The campaign on behalf of the Coalition was well organized, with the truth taking a back seat to propaganda. The Coalition candidates dominated the council that resulted from the 1991 election, meaning taxes were frozen (at least at the Town level) for some years after that. We are still hearing lamentations about things like infrastructure deficit. We believe that can be traced back to those years of no tax increases.

So yes, there were people around in the early '90s who had lots of foresight. Their problem was they were in the minority. If you're looking for someone to blame, just find someone who voted for no tax increase in Caledon in 1991.